

The Coatesville VA Medical Center (CVAMC) opened on Armistice Day November 11, 1930. It was built on 365 acres of land and had 481 beds which were nearly filled within three months. Over the years, the total inpatient population grew to approximately 1,500. CVAMC was originally designed and equipped for the special care of those veterans suffering from mental health disorders.

The cost of the original construction was \$1,695,257.00 and equipment costs were \$144,431.00. Any veteran who suffered from mental health disorders was eligible for admission.

The original organization chart had 12 physicians, 9 of who were residents, 1 dentist, 33 nurses, 10 occupational therapy aides, 1 physio-therapy aide, 74 nursing attendants, and other personnel to total 278 employees.

The first Medical Officer in Charge (Director) was Dr. Appleton H. Pierce. He was responsible to the Administrator of Veterans Affairs through the Veterans Bureau. The Clinical Director was responsible to the Medical Officer in Charge for Clinical Activities and the Business Manager for Administrative Affairs. The original purpose of the hospital/medical center was to promote the recovery of patients by the application of all means known to medical science; to ameliorate their condition where recovery may not occur; and to make a contribution to the further knowledge of mental illness. Some of the key staff included:

- Medical Officer in Charge.....Dr. A. H. Pierce
- Clinical Director.....Mr. W. J. Vivian
- Business Manager.....Mr. W. N. Morrison
- Chief Nurse.....Miss Lulu M. Bach
- Chief Dietician.....Miss M. Hazel Ricker
- Chief Occupational Therapy.....Mr. A. C. A. Kolhoff
- Chief Aide, Physio-Therapy.....Mr. Matthew J. Lawrence
- Chief Engineer.....Mr. Henderson Cornett
- Property Custodian.....Mr. John M. Nichols

On May 12, 1931 the Coatesville Veterans Administration Hospital was formally dedicated. It was an important day for the town of Coatesville and for its civic leaders who had worked so hard to have the hospital built in their community.

Ellis E. Stern, Commander of the Coatesville Clifford O. Mullin American Legion Post No. 64 and a prominent local banker said, "In particular, local businessmen were very anxious to have the hospital here, they expected an upswing in the local economy, which was suffering as was the rest of the country from the general economic slump".

Coatesville was a one industry town in 1931 and welcomed another potentially large employer to the area.

The choice of Coatesville as the site for the new VA hospital was not accidental. The new hospital was to be a “showcase for the nation”. It was to serve as an example of what the U.S. government was doing for the men who had fought and suffered for their country, as well as an example of the most current and humane methods of treatment for the mentally ill.

The following Directors have served CVAMC from 1930 to the present (2005):

DIRECTOR	YEARS SERVED
Appleton H. Pierce, MD	1930-1940
Clarence R. Miller, MD	1940-1947
Hugo Mella, MD	1947-1954
Henry Luidens, MD	1954-1957
Earl P. Brannon, MD	1957-1960
John A. Doering, MD	1960-1966
Frank F. Merker, MD	1966-1969
Otto Schaefer, MD	1969-1974
E. D. Shacklett, MD	1974-1979
J. L. G. Parsons II	1979-1987
Richard “Rod” Meiler	1987-1991
Gary W. Devansky	1991-present (2005)

Today, **CVAMC** employs approximately 1,136 FTEE.

Mr. Gary W. Devansky, Medical Center Director, has been the longest serving Director. He was designated Acting Director July 1, 1991 and was appointed permanently March 22, 1992. What follows is a portion of Coatesville’s plan for patient care services:

PHILOSOPHY:

Our guiding principle is to uphold the Veterans Health Administration’s long tradition of advocating for the sick and vulnerable by “Putting Veterans First”. While doing so, we strive to provide excellence in healthcare value. Performance improvement in both technical and perceived quality is continuously sought.

We are committed to providing the full array of VA healthcare benefits to eligible veterans. To do so, we seek to utilize dynamic management approaches that result in highly satisfied patients getting “the right care at the right time in the right place at the right cost”.

We approach each veteran’s healthcare from a holistic viewpoint. To achieve the best possible outcomes for our patients, we seek to determine each patient’s clinical and social needs, plan a course of appropriate care and ultimately assist them to achieve the best possible health status and personal independence.

MEDICAL CENTER MISSION:

Our mission is to improve the health of those we serve by providing primary care, specialty care, transitional care, and related social support services.

Our vision is to have our medical center recognized at the community, state, and federal levels as a provider of high quality healthcare and superb customer service. Additionally, we will be identified as having outstanding healthcare, education, and research programs.

We recognize these values and their role in fulfilling our mission and achieving our vision:

TRUST - RESPECT - EXCELLENCE - COMPASSION - COMMITMENT

PROFILE:

The Coatesville VA Medical Center is a Department of Veterans Affairs specialty referral facility within the VA Stars and Stripes Healthcare Network, VISN 4. The medical center primarily serves veterans residing in southeastern Pennsylvania, Delaware, and southern New Jersey. Emphasis is placed on veterans' clinical and social needs via programs such as substance abuse, post-traumatic stress disorder, chronic mental illness, homelessness, women's health and dementia. A continuum of healthcare services is available. Inpatient medical center care is provided for medical and psychiatric conditions. Domiciliary programs are operated for substance abuse treatment, post-traumatic stress disorder, and homelessness. Long-term care is offered in the nursing home program. Two non-VA organizations operate on-grounds residential programs for discharged veterans. A full range of outpatient services is provided at the medical center. Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs) are operated to provide both mental health and primary care services.

The medical center operates 472 beds in the following areas: 6 acute medicine beds, 73 psychiatric beds, 164 nursing home care beds, and 229 domiciliary beds. During fiscal year 2004, 22,754 veterans received care.

ORGANIZATION CHART:

